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Media Statement

DIABETES RESEARCH WA RAISES UNPRECEDENTED CORPORATE INTEREST

The gravity of the impact of diabetes on both personal health and productivity in the Australian workplace has sparked unprecedented corporate support for research into the condition, according to a local funding group.

Diabetes Research WA executive director Sherl Westlund said the organisation had recently simplified its name from the Diabetes Research Foundation of Western Australia and unveiled a sleek new look logo and website as it prepared for its biggest year yet.

“We are experiencing a surge in interest from companies, industry and community groups who now understand the urgent need to tackle the diabetes epidemic and are keen to support our search for a cure and better treatments, and we needed a modernised brand to help us do that,” Ms Westlund said.

The WA Road Transport Authority (WARTA) had also ‘adopted’ the group as its charity partner, as had Two Moons Consulting, a Perth-based specialist digital marketing company responsible for Diabetes Research WA’s rebrand.

Home Group WA has also been a strong supporter, injecting \$20,000 to the cause in 2012.

Diabetes Research WA Board chair and leading WA businesswoman Erica Smyth said: “There’s still a way to go but it’s clear that as the number of Australians with type 2 diabetes skyrockets, the personal health toll on workers, as well as the impact of increased sick leave, absenteeism and early retirement linked to the condition seem to be hitting home with the business sector.”

Diabetes already costs the Australian economy at least \$6 billion a year and the number of Australians living with it is predicted to rise from the current estimated 1.8 million to 3.3 million by 2031.

“It’s a frightening future we are staring down the barrel at but our message that we can ward off that nightmare with enough corporate support seems to, thankfully, be getting through and we are hoping this recent wave of support for our work is just the tip of the iceberg,” said Ms Smyth, who has type 1 diabetes.

“Our local researchers are now on the brink of some incredible breakthroughs, with one team investigating a protein which appears to work in a compensatory manner to reduce diet-induced obesity and type 2 diabetes and another leading the search for a test that could indicate a person’s chances of developing type 1 diabetes.”

WARTA CEO Ian King said the Association saw the benefits of aligning with Diabetes Research WA to help boost the wellness of its members.

“This is a charitable partnership that is win-win – our fundraising initiatives help Diabetes Research WA back world-leading WA research that has the potential to improve the health of millions of people and, in turn, that research and their understanding of type 2 diabetes prevention can help our members, many of whom are at increased risk of developing the condition,” he said.

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Said Two Moons' managing director Adam Donkin: "We've jumped on board with Diabetes Research WA because of the group's incredible determination to make a difference in stemming the tide of diabetes; after being introduced to them, we wanted to be part of that."

Diabetes Research WA, based at Royal Perth Hospital, is the State's longest running diabetes research funding group, having been established in 1976 to stimulate research into diabetes in Western Australia, has now raised and distributed more than \$4.6 million dollars for this work.

For information, please visit www.diabetesresearchwa.com.au or call (08) 9224 1006.

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* Schofield DJ, Shrestha RN, Passey ME, Earnest A, Fletcher SL. Chronic disease and labour force participation among older Australians. *Med J Aust.* 2008;189(8):447. [[PubMed](#)]

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